SEL, School Safety, and School Climate

School Violence Must Be Prevented Upstream Before a Crisis Can Develop

In response to the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas Public High School, the National Commission on School Safety and Florida's Marjory Stoneman Douglas Public High School's Safety Commission each recommend SEL as a key method for school violence prevention.[1,2]

These commissions follow up on what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention previously found: evidence strongly suggesting that student social- and self-regulation and problem-solving are key to school violence prevention.[3]

> Social-emotional learning (SEL) is integral to school safety and climate.

SEL Mitigates Violence

- Student self-regulation, social regulation, and problem-solving—several social-emotional skills—are key to preventing school violence.[4]
- School-based, universal SEL programs promote skills and attitudes that serve as protective factors, which can mitigate problematic behaviors.[5]
- Socially and emotionally supportive classrooms correlate with long-term reductions of violent behavior.[6]
- Programs that foster SEL increase the sense of safety for both staff and students.[7]

Research-based SEL learning programs provide **support for all students** and improve school climate and safety.

SEL Promotes a Positive School Climate

- Teachers, students, and parents all report increased student safety and well-being in schools with schoolwide SEL programs.[8]
- Classroom climate is essential to student success and has been shown to reduce violent behaviors.[6]
- Student conduct is positively related to the social-emotional aspects of the classroom climate, which is moderated by students' perceptions of their relationship with the teacher.[9]
- Teacher-student relationships and implementation of SEL can influence classroom and student outcomes; to this end, teachers' social-emotional skill set is critical.[10]

For more information, go to **cfchildren.org/policy-advocacy**

Policy Recommendations

- Promote research-based social-emotional learning in educational settings.
- Include research-based SEL strategies in school climate and safety efforts.
- Provide sustainable funding streams to schools to fund SEL as a Tier I universal intervention in a comprehensive plan for school safety.
- Enable access to educator learning opportunities for SEL.

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